

# Chapter 8

## Rural Land Use

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### A. OVERVIEW

The City of Fairmont started as farm property in 1818-19. The growth trend for the city since that time has been to convert rural land to urban uses generally through annexation. In recent practice annexation occurs after the rural land is converted to urban use or when a development plan is confirmed for the location. While the City of Fairmont is considered the Urban Center for Marion County, there is a substantial amount of rural land in Marion County that is not feeling pressure for development and/or annexation by the City of Fairmont.

In the growth areas of the State, rural land is giving way to urban development at a fast rate due to lower development costs. However this type of development is more costly in the long term because of the inefficiency or lack of municipal services that are expected by residents in these developments. Urban infill development is less conducive to sprawl than green field development by creating development options where services and infrastructure already exist. Therefore urban infill development can aid the preservation of rural land outside the city limits by relieving development pressure on undeveloped rural property. The city can help conserve rural land by promoting urban infill and increasing population density within the city.

### B. EXISTING CONDITIONS and BASIC ISSUES

Currently there is no land in the City of Fairmont that fits the definition or is otherwise designated rural land. This has been perpetuated by the past annexation practices of the city. Therefore, there is no rural land in the city limits of Fairmont that requires preservation planning. It is not likely that property inside the city limits will revert back to rural land.

Marion County is considered 50-75% rural according to County Data Profile prepared by Bureau of Business and Economic Research at West Virginia University.

### C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Fairmont can reduce the pressure for greenfield development by implementing the Smartgrowth Principals of Compact Development, Urban Infill, and Mixed Use Development in their Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations, and Land Development Ordinance.